

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 7, 14, 22 and 24 are amended by the present amendment.

Claim amendments find support in the originally filed specification at least at page 26, line 13, to page 29, line 16. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 4, 7-9, 11, 14-17, 19 and 22-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,480,297 to Suzuki et al. (herein “Suzuki”); Claims 3, 10 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Suzuki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,188,803 to Iwase et al.; and Claims 5, 6, 12, 13, 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Suzuki in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,650,861 to Nakajima et al. (herein “Nakajima”).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4, 7-9, 11, 14-17, 19 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Suzuki.

Claim 1 is directed to an image processing apparatus including, *inter alia*, at least one of an image reading unit and an image writing unit, as well as an image memory control unit that is commonly used by a plurality of applications including at least one of a facsimile application, a scanner application, a printer application, and a copier application. Further, the image processing apparatus includes an image processing unit that includes a plurality of interfaces each corresponding to one of the image reading unit and the image writing unit, and is configured to perform image data processing independently for each of the image reading unit and the image writing unit. Independent Claims 7, 14, 22, and 24 include similar features.

In a non-limiting embodiment, FIG. 5 shows an image processing unit 204 including a first input I/F 501, a first output I/F 503, a second input I/F 504, and a second output I/F 506. The first input I/F 501 and the first output I/F 503 interface to the image reading unit 101 via the image data control unit 203. The scanner image processing unit 502 performs image processing to convert the image data received from the image data controlling unit 203 for output and transmits the data to the image data controlling unit 203.

The second input I/F 504 and the second output I/F 506 interface to the image writing unit 104 via the image data controlling unit 203. The image processing unit 505 performs image processing to convert the image data received from the image data controlling unit 203 for output and transmits the data to the image data controlling unit 203.

In other words, the image processing unit 204 includes interfaces each dedicated to one unit (such as the image reading unit 101 or the image writing unit 104) (see pages 25, line 13 to page 29, line 16). As a result, it is possible to construct each unit as an independent unit, and machines having a similar data processing system such as a multi-function printer, a unit scanner, and a unit printer can be easily fabricated as different devices, thereby making it possible to construct a low-cost, multi-purpose system (see page 49, lines 9-16).

Applicants respectfully note that Suzuki merely describes a memory unit that is shared by each unit (see column 5, lines 34 to 45). However, in contrast to the present invention in which each unit is independent, the plurality of units in Suzuki are constructed as a single system and although the memory unit can be shared by each unit included in the system, the memory unit is not configured for each unit independently.

Therefore, according to Suzuki, if for example the version of a scanner unit in a system is to be upgraded, since the scanner unit has been incorporated in the system, it is required to add to the original system an extra new system having the upgraded scanner unit. In contrast according to the present invention, to upgrade a scanner unit in a system, only the

scanner unit is required to be upgraded, as long as the processes in the program used in the image processing unit which are related to the scanner unit are changed (see page 28, lines 6-12).

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit the amended independent claims patentably define over Suzuki.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the outstanding Office Action fails to make a *prima facie* case of anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). According to MPEP § 706.02, "for anticipation under 35 U.S.C. 102, the reference must teach every aspect of the claimed invention either explicitly or impliedly." However, Applicants respectfully note that the outstanding Office Action is silent regarding the entire last paragraph of Claim 1, which recites

wherein said image memory control unit is commonly used by a plurality of applications including at least one of a facsimile application, a scanner application, a printer application, and a copier application.

Thus, the outstanding Office Action does not indicate that Suzuki teaches every aspect of the claimed invention. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that rejection be withdrawn.

In addition, portions of the outstanding Office Action appear to be directed to previous versions of the claims, while other portions appear to be directed to the latest version of the claims. In particular, comments in the outstanding Office Action regarding at least Claims 1, 3 and 8<sup>1</sup> appear to ignore all the features added to those claims by the amendment filed October 2, 2003. However, the comments regarding Claim 14 refer to the version of Claim 14 as amended by that amendment.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is unclear whether the amendment filed October 2, 2003 was fully considered.

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<sup>1</sup> Office Action mailed September 13, 2004 at page 3, first paragraph, page 4, last paragraph, and page 7, last paragraph.

<sup>2</sup> Office Action mailed September 13, 2004 at page 5, line 12, to page 6, line 2.

Accordingly, for each of the reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted independent Claims 1, 7, 14, 22, and 24, and each of the claims depending therefrom, patentably define over Suzuki.

Further, Applicants submit that Iwase and Nakajima also do not teach or suggest the features of the independent claims. Thus, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of Claims 3, 10, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Suzuki in view of Iwase, and the rejection of Claims 5, 6, 12, 13, 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Suzuki in view of Nakajima.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted independent Claims 1, 7, 14, 22, and 24, and each of the claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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